

PREVENTION OF RETINAL INJURY AND DEGENERATION BY SPECIFIC FACTORS

This application claims priority of United States Patent Application Serial No. 5 08/334,859 filed November 4, 1994, which is a continuation of United States Patent Application Serial No. 07/836,090 filed February 14, 1992, which is a continuation-in-part of United States Patent Application Serial No. 07/691,612 filed April 25, 1991, which is a continuation-in-part of United States Patent Application Serial No. 07/570,657 filed August 20, 1990 and issued as United States Patent No. 10 5,229,500, which is a continuation-in-part of Serial No. 07/400,591 filed on August 30, 1989 and issued as United States Patent No. 5,180,820.

INTRODUCTION

15 The present invention relates to a method of preventing or delaying retinal degeneration caused by exposure to light or other environmental trauma, or by any pathological condition wherein death or injury of retinal neurons or photoreceptors occurs. It is based on the discovery that specific survival promoting factors, when introduced into the living mammalian eye, prevent damage and degeneration of 20 photoreceptors caused by light and on the further discovery that such factors can delay photoreceptor degeneration associated with inherited diseases of the retina.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

25 Trophic factors play a major role in neuronal survival and growth during development, in addition to the maintenance of differentiated neurons. Such factors also appear to play a role in the survival and regeneration of injured neurons in the central as well as in the peripheral nervous system.

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